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## IN BRIEF

### HEMATOLOGICAL CANCER

#### Gene classifier helps identify therapy for leukemia

Scientists have developed a 38-gene classifier that can accurately predict patients who are at risk of developing leukemia. Gene expression was assessed in CD34<sup>+</sup> cells from patients who developed therapy-related myelodysplasia or acute myeloid leukemia (t-MDS/AML) after transplantation and compared the results with control patients who did not develop t-MDS/AML. In an independent cohort, this classifier accurately distinguished patients who developed t-MDS/AML from those who did not, indicating the use of this classifier for determining those at risk for this complication.

**Original article** Li, L. *et al.* Altered hematopoietic cell gene expression precedes development of therapy-related myelodysplasia/acute myeloid leukemia and identifies patients at risk. *Cancer Cell* 20, 591–605 (2011)

### BREAST CANCER

#### Pregnancy does not adversely affect prognosis

It has long been believed that pregnancy after a breast cancer diagnosis adversely affects prognosis. A study of 115 women with breast cancer who were followed for a mean period of 6 years revealed no significant difference in prognosis between those that became pregnant and those who did not. Surprisingly, a higher proportion of pregnant women were disease free compared with non-pregnant women, suggesting that pregnancy after development of breast cancer might have a protective effect.

**Original article** Córdoba, O. *et al.* Pregnancy after treatment of breast cancer in young women does not adversely affect the prognosis. *Breast* doi:10.1016/j.breast.2011.10.001

### BREAST CANCER

#### Improving the AJCC staging system

There is wide variation in the survival of patients whose prognosis is determined using the American Joint Committee on Cancer (AJCC) staging system. A study in 3,728 patients who underwent surgery as first-line treatment has shown that the inclusion of pathologic stage, grade and estrogen receptor status improves the current AJCC staging system; these results were also confirmed in an external validation cohort. These findings indicate that the AJCC staging system should be revised to incorporate these three biologic markers.

**Original article** Yi, M. *et al.* Novel staging system for predicting disease-specific survival in patients with breast cancer treated with surgery as the first intervention: time to modify the current American Joint Committee on Cancer Staging System. *J. Clin. Oncol.* doi:10.1200/JCO.2011.38.3174

### HEMATOLOGICAL CANCER

#### BCR-ABL1 level at 3 months predicts outcome

A single measurement of *BCR-ABL1* transcripts 3 months after imatinib treatment is the best way to identify the patients who will not respond well, according to a study of 282 patients with chronic-phase chronic myeloid leukemia. Patients with elevated transcript levels at 3 months had a reduced overall survival; thus, measuring *BCR-ABL1* levels at this time point might allow earlier clinical intervention.

**Original article** Marin, D. *et al.* Assessment of *BCR-ABL1* transcript levels at 3 months is the only requirement for predicting outcome for patients with chronic myeloid leukemia treated with tyrosine kinase inhibitors. *J. Clin. Oncol.* doi:10.1200/JCO.2011.38.6565